



Satellite image with enhanced low cloud-top temperatures (degrees C) for 8:15 a.m. EST (NOAA)

Agricultural Weather Highlights - Friday - March 29, 2002

- ***In the West***, light, scattered showers are falling in **Arizona**, but the **central and southern Rockies** and the **Southwest** continue to suffer from long-term precipitation deficits and meager high-elevation snow packs.
- ***On the Plains***, recent warmth has melted much of winter wheat's protective snow cover across **northern areas**, including **Montana**. Farther south, extremely dry conditions are further stressing the **High Plains'** winter wheat, especially in an area centered on **southeastern Colorado, southwestern Kansas, and the Oklahoma panhandle**.
- ***In the Corn Belt***, rain showers are helping to recharge soil moisture reserves in the **Mississippi Valley**. As the spring planting season approaches, unfavorably dry conditions persist in parts of the **northwestern Corn Belt**, but soil moisture remains adequate to excessive in the **Ohio Valley**.
- ***In the South***, isolated showers are developing **west of the Delta**, signaling a storm system's approach. Warm, dry weather in the **Southeast** favors spring fieldwork and winter grain development, although subsoil moisture reserves remain limited.

Outlook: A slow-moving storm system will continue to produce light but beneficial precipitation in the **Southwest** today. Heavier rainfall will develop during the weekend from the **Red River Valley (Texas-Oklahoma border) southward into central Texas**. Showers will also overspread drought-affected areas in the **Southeast** and continue into early next week. In contrast, a very warm, dry weather pattern will develop across the **West**, while unfavorably dry conditions will prevail on the **northern and central Plains**. The NWS 6-10 day outlook for April 3-7 calls for another late-season cold outbreak to affect areas from the **Plains to the East Coast**. Cold conditions may again threaten the drought-stressed portion of the **Plains'** winter wheat crop. In contrast, warm, dry weather will persist across the **West**. Significant precipitation will be confined to the **East**, where widespread rain and snow may provide additional relief from long-term drought.

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